



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

STANFORD
LIBRARIES

BJ1285

M67

1907

—

Papers for Jewish People

NO. II

THE RELATION OF
FAITH TO CONDUCT IN
JEWISH LIFE

BY

LILY H. MONTAGU

PUBLISHED BY THE

Jewish Religious Union

October 1907]

Papers for Jewish People

No. II

THE RELATION OF
FAITH TO CONDUCT IN
JEWISH LIFE

BY

LILY H. MONTAGU

PUBLISHED BY THE

Jewish Religious Union

October 1907]

Jewish Religious Union

(Founded in 1902)

President.

CLAUDE G. MONTEFIORE, Esq.

Vice-Presidents.

ALBERT H. JESSEL, Esq., K.C. | The Honourable LILY H. MONTAGU

Joint Treasurers.

Sir ISIDORE SPIELMANN. | HARRY R. LEWIS, Esq.

Committee.

ISRAEL ABRAHAMS, Esq.

FELIX A. DAVIS, Esq.

The Hon. Mrs. ERNEST L. FRANKLIN.

P. J. HARTOG, Esq.

MAX HERZ, Esq.

LIONEL JACOB, Esq.

N. S. JOSEPH, Esq.

A. LEVINE, Esq.

HARRY S. LEWIS, Esq.

Miss DORA MARTIN.

F. H. HARVEY-SAMUEL, Esq.

OSWALD J. SIMON, Esq.

E. STERNHEIM, Esq.

Honorary Secretary—A. LINDO HENRY, Esq.

THE JEWISH RELIGIOUS UNION is a union of men and women belonging to different sections of the Jewish community, who have come together to try to combat, by various methods, religious apathy and indifference. They also wish to meet the religious needs of those who honestly desire or require a somewhat different presentment of Judaism from those which are officially current. Thus they seek to supplement existing agencies for religious teaching, and to influence some of those who are at present unaffected or unsatisfied by other Jewish organisations.

SERVICES

Services are held every **Saturday Afternoon** * at the **Wharnccliffe Rooms, Hotel Great Central, Marylebone Road** (entrance in Harewood Place), **at 3.30 p.m.**; and at the **London County Council School, Commercial Street, E.** (near Toynbee Hall), **at 4 p.m.** The Services are mainly conducted in English, and last about an hour and a quarter. Congregational singing is encouraged by the use of hymns, which are mostly in English. There is a volunteer choir, and at the West End Services there is an organ. Men and women sit together.

Those desirous of joining the Jewish Religious Union (minimum Subscription, Four Shillings) are invited to send their names and addresses to the Hon. Sec., 14 Fordwych Road, Brondesbury, N.W., who will be glad to supply all information.

* The Services will reopen (for the Sixth Session) on Saturday, October 12th, 1907.

THE RELATION OF FAITH TO CONDUCT IN JEWISH HOME LIFE

WE are accustomed to distinguish loosely secular from religious life, and to describe a religious man as one who scrupulously carries out all the observances honoured by his fathers. This view is common in all communities, but no separation of secular from religious life is really consistent with Judaism. Judaism teaches that all parts of life are one, and that all those parts of life can be consecrated to God. Gifts of body, heart, and soul are in themselves good; religion renders them holy. Judaism has always emphasised the dignity of human nature, and has glorified the joy of living. The full use of all gifts and powers can lead to holiness.

The believing Jew should be consciously affected in the conduct of his daily life by his conception of the Unity and the Omnipresence of God; by his belief that communion with a personal God is vouchsafed to him, and that by righteousness alone can he hope to serve his God. When Jacob escaped from his brother's anger, after having deceived his father to satisfy his own greed and to indulge the selfish ambitions of his mother, he was made to realise the Omnipresence, that fundamental doctrine of Judaism. For he was guilty and alone, and God showed him, even in the wilderness, the ladder which reaches to God. To him, in his moment of self-humiliation, was shown the relation of earth to heaven, the possibility of the Divine entering

into the soul of man, and he waked to find the lonely spot in the wilderness glorified by the presence of God. Through his faith he became a Prince of Israel, and through him all the families of the earth were blessed.

Have not the average men and women felt the tender call of God, summoning them to realise the Divine presence which may transfigure the stern actualities of life? Does not this summons come to us sometimes when we feel guilty and repentant, lonely and misunderstood?

God is One, and all creation is an expression of that Unity. All humanity belongs to God, and His spirit is for ever quickening within our hearts the ideal of self-sacrifice; man can never therefore shake off the responsibility he bears towards his brother. Cain knew the answer to his question—"Am I my brother's keeper?"—and fled, realising the depth of his own guilt, and since Cain's time men and women have been shown that they cannot become independent of their neighbour's need. The Jew is under an obligation to serve his neighbour, whatever his race or creed, as a sign of his Faith. Works of charity, the outcome of this faith in the unity of life, must be based on personal self-sacrifice. No man can be called charitable who, only after his death, in his will, shows a tardy recognition of his neighbour's claims. Simply and naturally we should consider these claims in our lifetime and try to relieve them, recognising our share in the misery, ignorance, and shame which surround us, and trying to uplift the abased life which, after all, is part of our own.

Faith in the Unity of life makes us realise that there is a Divine life within ourselves. As soon as we become self-conscious in the higher sense that we realise this Immanence of God, the possibilities of attainment become limitless. The persistence of evil is inconceivable in the light of that self-consciousness. The God within must ultimately triumph in unity with the God

without. Our share in the Divine life necessitates the belief in immortality; we have "Forever" in which to accomplish our high aims. We have no thirst for immediate popularity; the glamour of expediency fades; we prefer to fix our life "to a star," making our ideals move to a higher plane as we approach nearer to them.

Belief in the Omnipresence of Perfection stimulates us to consecrate our every-day life, and places us under the discipline of a great ideal. It increases the sum total of our happiness; we know that failure is only a part of God's scheme for the discipline of humanity, and that effort is Divine. Our faith demands the consecration of life as a whole, our inner as well as our outer life. It imposes a strict code on us in our business relations, and unfair gain and impure pleasure become impossible. The degradation resulting from ignoble pleasures is the more intense for the knowledge of the Divine within us. Pure pleasure and enjoyment, which stimulates our feeling of wellbeing, which corrects our sense of proportion, and increases our measure of human kindness, must, we believe, be acceptable to God, and will receive His blessing.

The Jew's religious inheritance places a heavy responsibility upon him. He can only make his life a revelation of his faith by consecrating all his powers to the service of God. This consecration involves not only effort, but constant self-denial and self-control. Passions must be controlled; when they interfere with the devotion to the ideal, they must be made subservient to it. Judaism does not teach the annihilation of human emotions, only their consecration.

Throughout the Hebrew Bible we find numerous passages in which God is said to require of man righteousness in conduct. On righteousness, and not on outward ceremonial or on intellectual assent to a number of theological propositions, the sovereign stress is habitually laid. It is illustrated in the story of

Nineveh, where the inhabitants were saved from destruction because they "turned from their evil ways, and from the violence that was in their hands."

Job, relying on the integrity of his life, pleads to be allowed to lay his cause at the judgment seat of God, where he asserts, with perfect faith, that he will be justified. The doctrine of the Supremacy of Conduct reaches its highest expression in the words: "God shall bring every work into judgment with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

We see around us signs that men of all creeds are joining us in the view that Righteousness, as the practical outcome of a religion, testifies to the truth of that religion, and that conscience and conduct are its silent witnesses. The Church of Israel has taught the world for all time that religion without morality is superstition. She has taught this lesson in her Bible, where again and again the Prophets denounce immoral worshippers in the name of the God of Goodness. "When ye make your prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. . . . Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Isaiah i. 15, 17). She has taught this lesson in her history, for, from the time of Aaron to the time of Judas Maccabæus, we read that only priests of blameless lives were deemed worthy for the work of the Sanctuary. But while rejoicing in the influence of our religion on surrounding creeds, we cannot help feeling anxious lest, relying on the comfortable feeling that it will be well with us so long as we lead fairly unselfish and temperate lives, we do not sufficiently consider that our conduct can only be worthy of the faith which inspires us if it taxes our highest powers of mind and heart. Our allegiance to the Omnipresent God involves the consecration of our lives to the noblest ideals conceivable by us. Since it is the programme of Judaism to develop as a power for

good in the world, then we must to-day make active practical well-doing the backbone of our faith, like the Prophets of old, who made morality inseparable from religion.

In the following few selected utterances of those teachers we shall find an inspiring force:—

“Speak ye every man the truth with his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates; and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour” (Zech. viii. 16). “Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from uttering deceit” (Ps. xxxiv. 13).

“He hath shown thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah vi. 8). “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (Deut. vi. 5). “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Levit. xix. 18). “Let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a perpetual stream” (Amos v. 24).

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity” (Ps. xxiv. 3, 4).

“Depart from evil and do good; seek peace, and pursue it” (Ps. xxxiv. 14).

All the teaching embodied in the foregoing passages is now the accepted standard of morality of the whole world, but it was originally promulgated by Jews, and as Jews it is our duty by our conduct to bear witness to its truth. We must endeavour, by treading in the ways of justice and mercy, to walk humbly with our God, to dwell in communion with Him by prayer and supplication, to seek inspiration from Him by asking His guidance in every important act of our lives. These duties form part of the conditions of the religion which we profess. To the believing Jew life begins

and ends with worship.¹ Worship begins and ends with life.

To those of us who are struggling after a living faith, the moral goodness of the unbeliever comes occasionally as a discouragement. We wonder what the use of religion is, seeing that so many excellent men and women lead good lives without its aid. But religion is a reality, or it is not. If it is a reality it must increase the possibilities of life, seeing that it removes life's limitations altogether, offering man Eternity in which to become at one with God. Possible communion with the perfect life outside us must stimulate the power of aspiration. If there is any meaning in prayer we should obtain a greater and nobler inspiration through communion with God: we should experience a greater love for our fellows and a stronger desire to serve them, through seeing God's love revealed in the lives of His creatures. Otherwise, that revelation is a deception. It seems to me that if we cannot accept these propositions we either deny the reality of religion, or (and this alternative is even more desperate) we must agree that religion is valuable to some temperaments and superfluous to others. The contemplation of so many good lives in which the power of faith is absent should fill us with a deep sense of humility. We who are conscious of God's help should have additional strength in the conduct of our lives. We should be ashamed to be less virtuous than those who deny that help. Our religion should make a stronger claim on us than do the negations of our ethical neighbours, who deny the existence of a personal God. If we are to be witnesses to the existence of God, our lives must be distinguished by a high morality which will persuade others of the truth of Faith.

¹ For Worship, I ought, perhaps, to substitute the Hebrew word *Abodah*, which signifies not only "worship," but "work" and "service." The old monk's aphorism, *laborare est orare* ("work is worship"), has a true significance when the work is in the service of humanity.

Prayer, as communion between man and God, appears to be the one generally accepted aid to holiness. The Old Testament contains very little dogma as regards the form prayer should take; it has few models to offer us. We have many regulations as regards place and time and historical significance of certain ceremonial observances which are to be handed down from generation to generation, but it seems understood that man can best formulate for himself his own needs in prayer. It is well for ourselves that a faith in a living God, who is interested in His creation, makes it possible for us to have communion with Him.

Prayer requires effort. The imperfect soul has to approach perfection.

People do not always consider the connection between prayer and every-day life, but when the days of childhood are passed, and we no longer think it right to pray for any outward thing which we may desire, there remains the intense longing to make our wills act in tune with the Divine Will, to feed our own strength from the Perfection outside us. A living faith in this Perfection is seldom realised before we have fought our way through a period of restless conflict with doubt. There is no sadness equal in intensity to the sadness of loneliness, to the misery of nobody caring. When once we have thrown the burden of doubt away from us by laying it upon God's love, we feel at peace with ourselves and with the world. "Whom have I in heaven," says the Psalmist, "but Thee, and there is none upon earth I desire but Thee."

We are sometimes discouraged by the conduct of the friend in whom we put our trust; we feel contempt for the average man who appears self-seeking and untrustworthy. Then we consider in prayer the love of God towards His children, who are fashioned, as we believe, in His image. This love, we feel, is perfected by an element of forgiveness which renders Him long-

suffering. It is true that we cannot realise the full depth and potency of His love, but with reverence and humility we may take it as our ideal and inspiration. Gradually, in the effort of prayer, we modify our harsh criticism and perhaps alter its direction. We see ourselves by the light of the Perfection, which is incomprehensible to our finite minds, and self-recognition restores to us our appreciation of our neighbour's worth. This self-recognition might lead us to despair were its sting not removed by the sense of courage and hope which communion with God affords us. As we lift our hearts to Him in prayer we are at peace. The Lord of the Universe is Father to each one of us. We bow our heads like "Hope" in Watts' immortal picture, and with eyes from which the signs of the world are shut out, we hear the whisper of God, and know it is eternal.

If we once feel that a faith in the Omnipresence of God and in Personal responsibility, in the Unity of God and in the power of communion with Him, affects our conduct, we should desire that the children of our Brotherhood should grow up influenced by this belief. In our homes we should like to see the idea of consecration take root, so that every family should be strengthened by the discipline which is derived from this ideal. In order to achieve this result there must be in our homes an atmosphere of prayer. There is a tendency to-day to sneer at that which is heroic in life, and to attribute cheap and sordid motives to noble deeds. But this tendency leads children to be ashamed of their own birthright. They are afraid to reveal their best in their intercourse with their neighbour. Cheap, unkind gossip and scoffing at sacred effort spoil the life of many a family. Devotion to the god of self-advancement builds up a powerful wall, which separates the heart of the children from their God.

It is well that we should observe the old aids to

holiness which helped to keep alive the ideal of consecration. The observance of the Sabbath eve, for example, ennobles family life. Undoubtedly, its neglect has frequently heralded the neglect of the moral law in Jewish homes; not only filial affection, but also the parental love has often been weakened by the disregard of religion in the home. The Sabbath eve celebrations give practical expression to the teaching of the Shemay; it draws the love of God into the actual family life, and consecrates the mutual affection of parents and children, husbands and wives, and brothers and sisters.

Liberal Jews are afraid of introducing into their home life any ceremonies whatever. They have known so much superstition intermingled with observance; they have seen inconsistencies between the believer's life and his professions; they have been shocked by the fact that devotion to form often conceals from the worshipper the ethical meaning of the ceremonies to which he clings. Through his misfortune or his fault the liberal has not always been introduced to the other side of the picture. He has not known the life purified by the self-sacrifice born of obedience, exalted by allegiance to an idea—the life which is the outcome of the genuinely pious school of Orthodox thinkers. The liberal needs the courage to sift the true from the false in ceremonials, and to regulate his life in accordance with his conception of truth. He claims that Biblical study gives him the right to “pick and choose” in the Bible his own Spiritual nourishment. Similarly, in the education of his children he should make use of those ceremonials which can appeal to their imagination and inspire them with noble ideals of conduct. I dwelt at the beginning of this paper on the danger of confounding “religion” with ceremonial observance in a Jewish life, and on the necessity of consecrating life as a whole to the service of God. With this ideal deeply rooted in the hearts of the parents, and, in consequence, appre-

hended unconsciously by the children, there can be no danger of ceremonials becoming a fetish in the home of the liberal Jew. He need not sacrifice the joyous influence of certain ceremonials, because in *some* homes this influence is perverted and degraded.

No modern institution can give the poetical warmth to our conception of liberty which the festival of Passover produces when observed with reverence and thanksgiving. Pentecost, with its far-reaching summons to allegiance to morality as the basis of Religion; Tabernacles, with its joyous songs of thanksgiving; New Year, with its tender appeal to Charity and Penitence—all these festivals may, through their observances, become formative influences in the lives of our children. No liberal can afford to ignore the teaching of "Atonement-day," the conscious subjection of the purified Soul to the influence of Divine Love and goodness. Home Worship brings together in close and loving relations all the members of families. Its memory binds the children for ever to Home ideals long after homes are broken up and separations have been experienced. A *living* faith, a faith which is part of actual life, an inspiring influence over life's actualities—this faith can best be fostered by being closely interwoven in the every-day life of the family. From the parents, by the force of example, the children must derive their sense of responsibility, their devotion to truth, their consciousness of purpose in life. If our Faith is occasionally dim, we must never lose the habit of prayer. God does not change; His love can affect our varying moods.

"Yea, I have sought thee; yea, I have found thee;
Yea, I have thirsted for thee;
Yea, long ago with love's bands I bound thee:
Now the Everlasting Arms surround thee—
Through death's darkness I look and see
And clasp thee to Me."

—Christina Rossetti.

The Unity and Omnipresence of God, the Power of Communion and justification by righteousness—these are the eternal verities of Judaism. By them and for them our fathers lived and died; still, to teach them to the generations, we to-day remain a separate brotherhood. Our romantic history, which modern research has to a great extent verified, our ancient institutions, give our mission peculiar significance and attraction. Our work is progressing, and we see our neighbour's religious ideals gradually approximating to our own. This should only increase our zeal. Loyal allegiance to the brotherhood is as necessary to-day as in the days of Jewish martyrdom, which have become historical. The English liberal Jews should grow up with a special belief in their responsibility to the community. They believe their faith to be in accordance with truth; to be living, because it is progressive and adaptable to changing conditions of time and place. In foreign countries to-day Jewish martyrs are still making history; all around us the powers of ignorance, indifference, and materialism are thinning our ranks and claiming their miserable victims.

It is from us liberals, then, that Hope and Reclamation must come.

By the conduct of *our* lives we must bear witness to the truth of our dogmas; our actions must be the justification of our faith. Only as a separate community—the nursing-ground of ideals whose germs were born among the Hebrew slaves in Egypt—can Jews hope to influence the thoughts of their own generation and the generations which will come after them. Only by loyalty to that community, and zealous endeavour within its ranks, can we liberal Jews hope to combat the ignorance and indifference which exist in our own midst and degrade the name of Judaism. Desertion from that community, whether by baptism or intermarriage, should be regarded as a cardinal crime,

12 THE RELATION OF FAITH TO CONDUCT

disinheriting the perpetrator from his glorious birthright of spiritual responsibility. "For to suffer two thousand years for an idea is a privilege that has been accorded only to Israel—'the soldier of God.' That were no tragedy, but an heroic epic, even as the prophet Isaiah had prefigured. The true tragedy, the saddest sorrow, lay in the martyrdom of an Israel *unworthy of his sufferings*," writes a great modern novelist.

If we consecrate our Home life by realising the dogmas of the Omnipresence and Unity of God, Justification by Righteousness and the Power of Communion, we can avert the tragedy of Unworthiness from the Kingdom of Priests—the Holy People, holy unto God.

LILY H. MONTAGU.

•

•

Stanford University Libraries



3 6105 016 530 078

STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
CECIL H. GREEN LIBRARY
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305-6004
(415) 723-1493

All books may be recalled after 7 days

DATE DUE

